



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

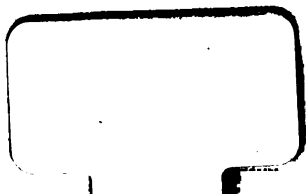
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

57



6000417738

32.631











# A S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE

OPENING OF THE GENERAL CONVENTION

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN

The United States,

IN ST. PAUL'S CHAPEL, NEW-YORK, OCTOBER 17, 1832.

---

BY THE

RIGHT REV. HENRY U. ONDERDONK, D. D.

Assistant Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

---

PUBLISHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH A STANDING RESOLUTION  
OF THE CONVENTION.

---



NEW-YORK:

PRINTED AT THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL PRESS.

1832.

631.





## S E R M O N .

---

### "A CITY NOT FORSAKEN."

ISAIAH lxiii. part of verse 12.

SUCH is one of the appellations given by the Prophet to the Church, the city of the living God. In his days, it had lost its excellence of character, and, with the exception of "a very small remnant," had "forsaken the LORD," until its "offerings were vain," and its "incense an abomination." But he was taught by his inspiration that the holy flock is never utterly abandoned by its divine Shepherd; and, looking forward to the coming of the Messiah, he announces exultingly that "the righteousness of Zion would go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth"—and that she would then be called "a city not forsaken."

The Church on earth is the body of men chosen by the Deity out of the world, for the furthering of his kind purposes toward that body; and, through it, toward the rest of mankind. At first, indeed, this body included all the posterity of Adam, all of whom were equally partakers of the light, and covenant, and benefit of the first promise of a Saviour from sin. But, as the world became degenerate, it was gradually cast off from this spiritual favor of God, and a selected portion of mankind were set apart for perpetuating the sacred community. Then, with Abraham, began the distinction between the *Church* and the *world*. The world had sunk into irreligion, idolatry and vice, and would sink yet lower. The Church, though with many backslidings, was gradually to improve, and its members

become more enlightened and more pure; and thus, through its means, the evil course and tendency of men was to be counteracted, and, in the progress of ages, was to be so remedied, as that virtue and piety should prevail universally, and the whole world be at last gathered again into the Church. Such, we infer from Scripture, is the general plan of the ALMIGHTY in relation to his kingdom upon earth.

As we are now assembled for transacting the business, and consulting for the prosperity, of one branch of this kingdom, the subject introduced is appropriate. Your preacher cannot indeed hope to offer new illustrations; yet the ordinary topics may, on such an occasion, be brought to mind with advantage. Two principal heads naturally suggest themselves — the CHURCH itself, and its MINISTRY. Under the former head we shall notice the relations of the Church with God, with its *members*, and with the *world*. Under the latter, the *source* of the ministerial office, the *mode* of its constitution, and its *claims*. May the HOLY SPIRIT enlighten and strengthen us, that we may both discern and obey the truth!

I. We consider the CHURCH in its several relations.

1. The fundamental relation between God and the Church is, his giving it his revealed *word*, his granting and securing to it the knowledge and the hope of salvation. To conceive of this, we may go back in imagination to the fall of man from innocence. When Adam was thus lost, he was ignorant of any means of escaping the punishment he had incurred. To enlighten his ignorance, God was pleased to reveal to him the doctrine of a Saviour, the promise of Him who should *brise* the serpent's head. And in this grant of revealed truth, we discover the first benefit of a church estate — to the Church "are committed the oracles of God," the Scriptures of salvation. The Deity preserves in the Church the knowledge of the things which

belong to the everlasting peace of her members, and thus proves that she is "a city not forsaken."

Another relation of the Church with God is the *covenant*. And this relation will be best understood in connexion with the one just mentioned. When the Deity acquaints men with the means of salvation, he announces also the conditions of salvation; when the Redeemer was promised to Adam, he was doubtless made to understand that repentance and faith were the terms on which that Redeemer would finally save him. Thus was formed the covenant — God, on the one part, being engaged to give men salvation through the promised Messiah — man, on the other part, being *held* engaged to repent of his iniquity, and believe in the Messiah thus offered. The same covenant still obtains in the Church. The oracles of God, the Scriptures, assure us that there is an offer made us from on high of grace here and glory for ever, through the cross; from which offer the heavenly party will never swerve: at the same time those oracles hold us, the other party, engaged to "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord JESUS CHRIST." Thus is the covenant unfolded to us in Scripture. In the sacrament of baptism it is sealed: and that done, we are expressly certified that, if we fail not, God will not recede from his promise. Salvation is thus positively stipulated to all who, with the seal of baptism, have likewise the new heart and new spirit. The names, also, once registered in the covenant, if "not blotted out," will of course be retained in that covenant, and be "confessed by CHRIST before his Father and before the angels," in the last day. And thus the covenant sealed in baptism becomes, in the highest sense, "the everlasting covenant."

Another relation of the Church with God, is, its being favored with peculiar measures of *grace*. All to whom pardon is made known in Scripture, being required by that

Scripture to unite with the Church, it is made the channel of holy supplies to its members in special abundance. There is one body and one Spirit to animate it, and all in union with it; and if we would drink of the waters of life, as God has appointed us to drink them, it must be as they are connected with the oracles, and the covenant, and the ordinances of life. The waters of life are "a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." "THERE" it is, in that "city not forsaken," that "the LORD promises his blessing, and life for evermore."

Under this head we may notice that the earthly Church is in *one society* with God and all other perfect beings. The Church is represented as a temple, or sacred enclosure, including both heaven and earth. Hence, on the one hand, we are said to "sit in heavenly places;" and on the other hand, the principalities and powers in heavenly places learn by the Church [on earth] the manifold wisdom of God." Thus are "all things gathered together in one in CHRIST, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth;" and thus "are we come to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to God the judge of all." Such is "the city of the living God." — It is our privilege, therefore, Brethren, to be numbered with celestial beings. And, except we despise this honor, and have our "part taken away out of this holy city," our admission into it here will prove our admission into it for ever.

Such are the relations of the Church with God. His truth, his covenant, and his grace, are given to it, making him to be peculiarly *its* God. And the saint who "walks worthy of his vocation," thus finds begun, in the "city of God" here, the everlasting favor of his heavenly King.

2. Next to the relations between the Church and the Deity, the most interesting are those between the Church and its *members*. These relations are mutual, the body owing certain duties to the individuals belonging to it, and they, in return, owing certain other duties to the body.

These duties may be briefly stated. The Church owes to its members love and protection, instruction in the truth, an uncorrupted administration of the ordinances, and the provision of a pure worship, and also, a due measure of worldly relief to the necessitous. The members, in return, owe to the Church obedience, the resolute maintenance of her authority and good order, peace among themselves for the preservation of her unity, adequate pecuniary support, and, above all, the contribution of their own virtuous and holy characters to make good her character as "a praise in the earth." God "forsakes not his city" — and neither should she let her people be as if forsaken — nor they her.

Duties like these are of the highest obligation, for, on the due and mutual performance of them depends, we are taught, the unchanging destiny of immortal souls. Should the Church, for example, deal falsely with her flock, and withhold the doctrines and the ordinances of life, or change them into unsound instructions and perverted services, "stumbling blocks and occasions to fall" will be "put in the way of the brethren," "unwary souls" will be "beguiled," and thus "those for whom CHRIST died" may be "destroyed" for ever. On the other hand, should the members do injury to the Church, by weakening its rightful authority, by severing its unity and making it a house divided against itself, or by their sinful conduct hurtful to its reputation, they will be guilty of the loss of all the souls that might, but for their fault, have been won and saved through the Church's wider agency and more perfect influence. — Sins of the Church, and sins against

the Church, always may, and often do, prove fatal to the eternal interests of undying souls.

But, suppose some of these mischiefs not to be so aggravated as to extend their consequences into eternity, still we may perceive, in the present life, the injurious effects of a want of fidelity on the part of either the Church or its members. — Wherever, in the Church, the Gospel is corrupted or burdened with superstitions, wherever its vital doctrines are denied, or its ordinances rated cheaply, and wherever the pastors of the flock are weak or negligent, there spiritual improvement languishes, and virtue and morality, losing much of the support of religion their natural ally, are left to the mercy of chance and circumstances. Such was the case in the Prophet's time — the Church was then "termed Forsaken" — it was so unsound, with the exception of a "small remnant," that even "the solemn meeting was iniquity," and "the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint." Such also has been the dark character of more than one corrupted branch of the Christian Church. Equally injurious to the present welfare of souls is waywardness on the part of members of the Church. It produces divisions, and often schism, and occasions, as a necessary consequence, uncharitableness and alienation among the brethren, and "where envy and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work;" the godly are distracted in their heavenly pursuits, and contaminated afresh with unkind and unholy passions; and all, who are thus in fault, add to their sins while they may often seem to be contending for the truth. If also members of the Church make other members feel the influence of their wickedness, instead of that of their virtue, they destroy discipline, they vitiate the effect of the good example of others, they retard their brethren who are endeavoring to go onward in piety. Though therefore sins of the Church,

or sins against the Church, should not reach to eternity in their effects, they yet are means of strengthening the dominion of Satan, and of weakening the dominion of God.

Such are the mutual obligations of the Church and its members. Such, both on earth and in eternity, are the awful consequences of infraction of those duties, on either part. Both the Church and its members must be faithful, that its inspired appellation may be true in its full meaning — “a city not forsaken.”

3. The Church has a relation to the *world*. Though selected and gathered out of the world, it retains kindness to it, and, either directly or indirectly, is continually furthering its best interests.

The holy “city is set on a hill, and cannot be hid” — it is set there for the imitation of the world. Depraved as is human nature, there is mingled with it enough of that spiritual gift which is vouchsafed to “every man that cometh into the world,” to secure a great though silent effect to good example. With all our natural preference of sin, the finger of God in the soul writes there an approbation of virtue and goodness, and it is to this latent influence in and over the heart that holy example owes its power. And the Church, as the purest body of mankind, must and does have an improving effect on nations and communities less pure. This effect may not always be clearly perceptible ; but it cannot be doubted, that, in a reasonable time, actual benefit will result, wherever the Church duly displays itself in contrast with infidelity or with heathenism. It is declared to be “the light of the world ;” even where it seems most “forsaken,” there is “light in the dwellings” of Christian Israel, compared with the darkness that spreads around them.

But the Church has a more powerful standing among men — it is a kingdom, the kingdom of God, having much



earthly influence over human principles and human affairs. Though its dominion is not of this world, it yet wields a sceptre, the sceptre of truth ; and the truth is mighty, and will prevail. It wields also the sceptre of science, learning, refinement ; to no other portions of the human family has God given equal light and knowledge ; and knowledge is power, and gains always the pre-eminence. Both by these natural means, and by the special and pledged providence of God, the limits and the sway of the Church are extending from age to age. And, in due time, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord," and that beautiful scripture reach its entire fulfilment, "Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."

Similar to these effects of the Church upon those who are without, is its influence on the wicked among its own members. The pious and upright present a most attractive persuasion to their worldly and unfaithful brethren ; and many doubtless are, by this means of grace, won to the bosom of their reconciled Father, who would not have been drawn to their duty, or have persevered in it, by any instrument of the Spirit less powerful than the continual prompting of good example. Besides : as all in the Church profess the fear of God, and declare in its favor, whether they practise it or not, the very worst of its members gives thus a countenance to the cause of religion, which frowns on his own unworthiness, and tends to deter others from dishonoring the "holy name by which they are called." Thus is the Church, though composed of the bad as well as the good, a check of no small power upon itself. Seldom, perhaps never, has any branch of it sunk so low as not to be better than the heathen or infidels about it.

Such is the influence of this sacred kingdom on the unholy character of the world, and such its excellence compared with the world. Like, indeed, all institutions among

men, it is not without incidental blemishes ; and hence, by selecting the darker portions of the Church and the brightest specimens of the world, the contrast in excellence may not appear as we have stated it. But take them each as a whole, and compare their moral standing, and there is no age in which the household of God has not greatly excelled the rest of the human family of the same period. Take also the Church and the world in their national divisions, and the same will probably be the uniform result. No better proof need there be of its enjoying a peculiar dispensation of the Spirit — no better proof that it is indeed “a city not forsaken.”

II. Having represented the Church as a social body, we are naturally led to speak of its officers, the **MINISTRY** which **CHRIST** has given it. That every society should have officers for its superintendence and the transaction of its affairs, needs no demonstration.

1. And here, the first inquiry is, concerning the *source* of their authority. That, in the society which is the visible kingdom of God, the whole power and rights of these officers should proceed from the Sovereign whose representatives and ambassadors they are, appears sufficiently evident in itself. And that such was the case in the beginning, we have ample proof in the New Testament. **CHRIST** appointed his apostles, ordained them as ministers, gave them their commission. **HE** was the source from which they derived their office.

To the same divine source, it is equally important to remark, we trace our own authority as officers in the Church. The means by which the commission given first to the apostles was to be transmitted by them to their successors, and by these to others, was the laying on of hands. And this succession, in order that the office of the ambassadors of **CHRIST** may be traced to Him, must of course be

unbroken. Link by link, from one ordainer to another ordainer, has the sacred authority descended the chain, from the Saviour to the apostles, and from them to their successors in the present day. On no other principle can this divine commission be preserved among men.

Sufficient proof of its preservation can easily be given. We find in Scripture that Matthias was commissioned by the eleven, and Timothy by Paul, as the eleven and Paul had been commissioned by CHRIST ; which facts assure us that succession in the ministry began with inspired, that is, divine sanction. We learn, from the positive and repeated testimony of ecclesiastical historians, the only and the proper authority subsequent to the date of Scripture, that this succession was most carefully preserved. We nowhere discover any proof or any suspicion that it has been broken, except in a few Churches, which can be distinguished from the rest : the existence of which distinction is, of itself, no mean argument for its having been preserved in other Churches ; it being a fair presumption, that history would record the defect of the latter, were there any, as well as of the former. Other considerations may be added. The primitive Church is allowed to have been comparatively pure, and it certainly was too pure to accredit, or tolerate longer than was required for discipline, any irregularity which could vitiate an ordination. After Christianity was established, the Church obtained so much honor, and so much wealth, that competition and rivalry would secure an effectual vigilance in this matter, and it would be scarcely possible to assume the ministry without due license. Moreover, there never was any motive in the Church at large to derange this order, inasmuch as there was no difficulty in obtaining the laying on of hands from authorized ordainers : and though some particular Churches have departed from this order, it was not till at least four-

teen centuries after the apostles — no plea of necessity or convenience having ever before been made, and their innovation affecting only their own ministry, not that of any other branch of the Christian family. These considerations throw the burden of proof on those who deny the uninterrupted succession — the presumptive argument is with those who assert it; nay, as there is no proof whatever against them, nor even a surmise of specific character, they justly claim the final and decisive argument. The ministry has thus continued, perpetuated by successive ordinations, and always under the public eye, from the beginning to this day.

And, let it not be forgotten that if registers had been kept of all Christian ordinations, it is probable that mistakes would have found their way into the copies — there are slight ones in the genealogy of our LORD, and that of the Jewish priesthood was not uniformly perfect.\* In recording the claims of a hundred thousand ministers, perhaps several hundred thousand, the errors incident to transcribing would, long ere this, have thrown the whole into irreparable confusion; and, with registers so imperfect, we should have to rest the spiritual authority of our clergy, not on those registers, but on such arguments as have now been stated. And hence, we may justly declare that we have even better evidence of the uninterrupted succession, than could be furnished in the ordinary course of things, by manuscript records from the apostles' days until now. While this ought to satisfy the infidel that the apostolic commission, despise the thing itself as he may, has at least been duly preserved, the Christian derives an additional argument, nay, to him final assurance of the fact, from the promise of the Saviour, that He would "be

---

\* See Bishop PATRICK on Ezra ii. 61, &c.

with" his ambassadors "alway, even unto the end of the world." And we thus add another to the proofs that his Church is "a city not forsaken."

2. We must not leave unnoticed the *mode* in which the Christian ministry is constituted. That the officers in God's kingdom should be of different grades, and have different degrees of power, that arrangement being what every society has found necessary to good order, is to be presumed from the nature of things, and may be fully proved from the New Testament. Hence the three ranks in the Christian ministry. Episcopacy has often and unanswerably been shown to be of divine and of exclusive authority — but as this is a subject for a volume, rather than for part of a discourse, we enter not now into the discussion; we only repeat the assertion, that its origin is divine, and that no other ministry is valid.

3. The apostolical ministry being thus appointed for the Church, its *claims* are obvious; all the members of the Church are bound to conform to it. There is not, indeed, sufficient warrant, in the judgment of your preacher, to declare that none are in the Church who are not under a valid ministry; difficulties of magnitude seem to forbid so unqualified an assertion. But we are secure in saying, that, to be regular, to be Scriptural, every thing in the Church, permanent in its nature, should be arranged, as nearly as possible, as CHRIST and his apostles set the example. Teaching, preaching, administering the sacraments, and declaring with authority the terms of pardon, and actual pardon from God if the terms have been fulfilled, should be done by those only whose commission is certainly from the apostles, that is, from CHRIST. Sacred truth may indeed be taught by a private Christian, as such,\* to his family,

---

\* Lay readers do not teach of themselves, but convey the instruction of ministers, or such as is approved by them. Catechists do the same.

dependents and friends, and indeed in all casual intercourse ; and God forbid that we discountenance labors so useful and benevolent ! But public teaching on his own responsibility by one not commissioned, is irregular ; it is assuming the function of an ambassador of CHRIST, our sovereign, without receiving credentials from him. So likewise may any Christian comfort a penitent brother with the hope that God will pardon him for CHRIST's sake ; but to assure the sincere and believing penitent that God has pardoned him, and will hold the pardon good if he forfeit it not, was committed, by Him who procured the pardon, to the ministry. We may also admit that baptism, by whomsoever performed, is valid ; large portions of the Church have acted on this opinion, and it is not without warrant from Scripture ; but if the rite be not performed by an authorized minister, it is irregular, and it therefore should never, nor for any consideration, be performed by others. It need scarcely be added, that every baptized person is under the covenant and in the Church.

But let not these distinctions be misinterpreted. They place on ground not debateable the claim of the apostolic ministry. Not to conform to that ministry is to cast contempt on the apostles, and on CHRIST, their master and ours ; it is to presume that the "city not forsaken" has been so forsaken of its King, that He disregards the governors to whom himself gave commission, and with whom he promised to remain. "Obey them which have the rule over you, and submit yourselves," is the express command of Scripture to conform to the Scriptural ministry : rate it as one of "the weightier matters" of the "law of CHRIST," it must be "done ;" rate it as "least" among them, it must "not be left undone." Although the Church, like civil society, may exist in an irregular state, we are nevertheless bound to conform in all things to the appointed rule.

We shall conclude this train of remarks with two further suggestions.

Because the redeemed will be gathered, in the last day, out of every nation and kindred, and, we may add, out of every sect and denomination, it is too commonly supposed that the ministry, and even the Church, are institutions of but little importance, and of no effectual obligation. But this is a mode of reasoning that will subvert the whole of our religion. Many conscientious Heathens, and sincere Mahomedans, and upright Jews, will, we trust, be found among those who, in the resurrection, shall stand on the right hand of the final Judge; shall we say then, that Christianity is in any way defective in obligation? God forbid! Neither let us say, because many will be saved who profess Christianity, though not in the Church, and many not under the Scriptural, the apostolical ministry, that the Church and ministry are of questionable importance. They are enjoined upon us in the inspired volume—in that “Scripture” all of which was “given for our learning,” no part of it for our rejection.

Above all things, let us remember that the Church and ministry are not institutions which end in themselves—they are but means for promoting piety and virtue, “repentance toward God and faith toward our LORD JESUS CHRIST,” the new heart and newness of life. If, without these, any one build his hope on being in the true Church, and under the apostolic ministry, he “builds on the sand;” and the “floods” of death, if not lesser streams, will “make an utter end” of his baseless confidence. The “end of the commandment,” said St. Paul, in giving his charge to a minister of the highest grade, “is charity,” divine love, “out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” As the means for producing this end, in individuals, and, in God’s own time, throughout the world—

as the means designated and ordained by the Saviour — as the means devised by infinite Wisdom, and not improvable by man — we commend to you the CHURCH and its apostolic MINISTRY.

*Brethren, the Members of this Convention,—*

Our branch of the Church has had great cause, since its organization, to bless God that it has been “a city not forsaken.” Difficulties beset its early course; but they soon vanished, and our united communion set forward with hope. Other discouragements have at times appeared; but they have passed away as our affairs were more thoroughly matured. At present, we are not without gloomy recollections of what has occurred since we last assembled.

Since we last assembled, three of the fathers of our Church have been taken from us: Much have we deplored the loss — much do we still deplore it. They were faithful, they were successful, they were beloved. We bless God for giving them to our Zion: we pray God, that in depriving us of them, he will still show that our Zion is “a city not forsaken.”

While these have been called hence, another, their senior, and the senior of us all, is left — our patriarch, not indeed by office, yet in our feelings and affections. He is still among us, representing here our national Church from its beginning: full of years, yet bright in intellect; remaining, as did St. John in the primitive age, long after the departure of all the brethren in the apostleship of a nascent Church, younger brethren also in that grade passing, not slowly, from about their senior.

That our holy “city” has never, from the first, been “forsaken,” this our patriarch is witness. Hear his testimony, in his own words, pronounced at the close of a



former Convention\* — how encouraging is the language of his high and manly faith !

“I have attended all the meetings of the General Conventions, from the beginning of our organization. On some of those occasions, we assembled with apprehensions in the minds of many judicious men who had the interests of the Church at heart, that the deliberations would be disturbed by angry passions, and end in disunion. In every instance, the reverse was the issue : which led me to hope, that there was in this matter a verifying of the promise of the great Head of the Church, of being with her to the end of the world.”

So it has been hitherto ; so we trust it is now, and will always be. CHRIST is “with” our holy city — she is “a city not forsaken.”

---

\* In 1821.







